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ALVIN W. PRICE, EDITOR.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1914

"Peace on earth, good will to men." This has been changed for the time being in the old country to "Hell on Earth, Ill Will to Men." It must be a day full of sorrow to the people of Belgium—to those who remained faithful to an unfortunate country. Christmas will aggravate their unhappy condition. "A sorrow's crown of sorrows is remembering happier things."

In our own country Christmas is still a mystery to this writer. What should be the happiest time of the year does not so prove to every one. And we are one of those unfortunates on which Christmas produces a reverse effect. We are one year older and uglier and more sinful, and the bills are falling around us like snow flakes, and we scratch our shins before the fire and think of our miserable condition and wonder if anything on earth is worth while.

And we see all around us men who superinduce contentment by the use of alcohol, and know that they are experiencing that kind of exhilaration that comes from sliding down an incline. The farther they slide the farther they will have to climb back to the starting point.

And if you have looked upon the children filled with a healthful pleasure and see how they enjoy being alive, you are filled with black envy and wish you could be a boy again. Some years ago you toyed slowly to the top of the hill of life, and everything was hid from you. Then you found yourself at the top and suddenly realized that from that time you would go down hill and the horror of it all was that you could see all the way before you, and there was naught to do but to fall into your stride and endeavor to hide all fear and trembling until the last step was taken. We hate these annual reminders of the years which go so slowly and yet pile up so fast. We are on a journey in which there is no variableness nor shadow of turning.

Horace left this behind him: "The short span of life forbids us to spin out hope to any length. Soon will night be upon you, and the faded Shades and the shadowy Plutonian home."

In 1659, Massachusetts passed the following ordinance: "Anybody who is found observing by abstinence from labor, feasting or any other way, any such day as Christmas day, shall pay for every such offence five shillings." And this law remained in force for twenty-two years, and when it was finally repealed it caused great indignation among the orthodox Puritans who saw "No good in the observing of any feast day and more especially were they set against Christmas day and the way that the worldly minded kept it. In 1643 the Roundheads passed a similar law in Parliament but it did not meet with the sanction of the people. Those who kept their stores open in London were maltreated by mobs and their shops wrecked, so their law was more or less a dead letter in England. But in New England to this day the old feeling against Christmas keeps it from being the most important festival. At the time that New England had passed laws against Christmas, the Virginians of the chevalier blood of England, were merry for a month, and to this day it is the most important holiday of the year. Men who never tamper with it the whole round of the calendar will relax on this occasion. There is a kind of insidious drink called eggnog which is a favorite method of introducing alcohol into the system, and when the poor man runs up against this concoction, he might as well throw his notch stick away for there is no way of gauging the amount of the pisen that he does imbibe, and he will have to trust to the great number of assailants that storm the bowl with him and depend upon the psychology of the crowd.

"Let other hours be set apart for business, Today it is our pleasure to be drunk."

The holiday dates from an unknown period, but enough is known to be sure that it antedates the Christian era by many centuries. It is generally accepted that the time is fixed by the winter solstice, after which time the sun which has seemed to be fading away turns and comes back. No one knows anything definite about its origin beyond the fact that it is undoubtedly pagan in its inception. And for some centuries the Christian church considered the observance to be heathenish. In 352, Pope Julius of Rome upon the report of St. Cyril that December 25th was held by the greatest number of Christians to be the date of Christ's birth fixed a festival as a Christian institution on December 25th which was

speedily accepted by all nations of Christendom. Owing to the fact that for unnumbered ages all pagan Europe had celebrated the lengthening days at this time the holiday was easily established. Is it not a strange thing that today the methods of observance of this great season are half pagan and half christian? And some will revel in "Drink, puppy drink," while others chant:

"I heard the bells on Christmas day Their old familiar carols play, And wild and sweet The words repeat Of peace on earth, good will to men!"

Probably the earliest method of converting the heathen to Christianity was the adoption of all the harmless features of heathen festivities and ceremonials. A Feast of Fools was adopted and learned doctors of the Christian church reconciled their consciences with a kind of philosophy to the effect that the folly that is natural and born with us should be exhorted at least once a year. But the Christmas season soon got beyond the control of the church, and then came clerical protests and papal anathemas. In the fourteenth century the Council of Auverre was moved to inquire into the matter and a division immediately arose. Some declared that the Christmas festival was acceptable to God. But Gerson, the most noted theologian of the day said: "If all the devils in hell had put their heads together to devise a feast that should utterly scandalize Christianity, they could not have improved upon this one." That council was evenly divided upon the question Christmas as a Christian institution, and it seems to us that the matter has never been settled to this day.

We are thankful however that there is one important feature that we can all agree upon and that it is a blessing to all children rich or poor, and that there is a Santa Claus that sees that all children have the happiest times of their lives on these occasions. There may be trouble and distress with the grown ups, but with the little folks it is just one glad thing after another that comes crowding into their lives for weeks in the cold and bitter winter. It is a grand thing for the kids that at some remote period our ancestors installed into office that Santa Claus person, with the help of Merry Christmas, his lovely daughter, that all the young ones have such a good time in the middle of winter that they look forward to it the whole year through.

"Life still hath one romance that none can bury— Not time himself, who confines Life's romances— For still will Christmas gild the year's mischances, If Childhood comes as here to make him merry."

In digging up a few historical facts to garnish these few vagrant thoughts on the season, we find an old poem that says that when Christmas falls on Friday that it denotes a prosperous year. This fits in well with the thousand and one interviews that have been published in the last few weeks predicting good times. "Man never is, but always to be blest." The poetry seems to go very lame—on three legs so to speak—but it has been preserved for some reason not apparent to the casual observer.

"Now take heed every man, That English understand can, If that Christmas day fall On Friday, know well all That winter season shall be easy, Save great winds aloft shall fly; The summer also shall be dry And right seasonable, I say. Beasts and sheep shall thrive right well, And other victuals shall not fail; What child that day is born, Great and rich he shall be of corn."

That poetry is pretty near bad enough to have been composed by Chaucer for an early issue of the Hagerstown Almanac. But it certainly gives aid and comfort to the predictions of the President and other optimists that we are on the verge of great prosperity. So here's hoping that you may have a good time Christmas for after Christmas there comes Lent.

There was a sensational story about a lion ranging in the woods near Kayser. There appears to be no truth in the story. The Baltimore Sun tried to work it in that it was a British lion fooled by the name of the town in thinking that he would find the Kaiser, but it is more likely that a chance observation that there was a good deal of lying done about the Kaiser, started the germ in the mind of some ingenious reporter.

Shirley Mitchell, the Wirt county iconoclast, has offered his services to the Republican party for the 1916 campaign which is now on, or as long as the said party shall last. While we Democrats can ill afford to lose any person clad in pants, we do not know of any member of the party that we could better spare. When Mitchell joins a party it is time for Lloyds to raise the rate.

The New York World says that the war hero, Drummer Spence John Bent Ask, has a name which does not lend itself to poetry. It is mistaken. A poet has to carry so many more words in stock than any other dealer, that he has room for all. He must be full of synonyms and parts of speech. All is fish that comes to his net. The one in question might not play up so well on a limp line with a running reel. But with a good stiff line and a ten foot rod, with the reel out of sight behind your hand, you can get some semblance of life even from this sullen pseudonym, to-wit:

Said the well-known drummer Spence John Bent Ask, As he reached around for his pocket flask, "This thing's forbid for a perfect reason, But bars are down at the Christmas season." On this slight pretext he toyed with the rum— Got tight as the skin on his kettle drum. "What name?" growled the Judge who took him to task, "John Smith," quoth the nervous Spence John Bent Ask.

When the Germans shelled Scarborough last week they little knew what they were stirring up. Jimmy Hebben is one of the city fathers of that city, the most noted bathing resort on the northern coast. We predict that something bad will happen to the Germans very soon. Hebben is slow to wrath but he is a devouring British lion when aroused, and shelling a town at breakfast time is enough to wake him up.

At the county court last week D. W. Sharp qualified as constable of Edray District.



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Marlinton General Hospital
and Sanitarium

will be open to the Public, January 1st, 1915

2 to 4 p. m. 7 to 9 p. m.

ONOTO
We are having old time winter weather at last.

C. C. Baxter killed two eighteen month old hogs Monday that weighed 438 and 308 pounds. Can any one in the county beat this.

Our merchant, Mr. Hamlin shipped a fine lot of poultry Saturday.

Geo. A. C. Aldridge was at the county seat Tuesday on business.

W. H. VanReenan has rented his barber shop to Wimer and Evans, and has gone to Hosterman where he will accept a position.

Rev. H. A. Coffman preached at Hamlin Chapel Sunday afternoon.

Mack Mann and family were shopping in Marlinton Saturday.

Henry Moore has finished the parsonage at Edray.

Miss Bessie Baxter will be at home from Parkersburg to spend the holidays.

Robert Jordan and T. D. Moore were here Sunday.

Kineaid and Myers have moved their well machine from Pine Grove to Harry Gum's place.

Miss Gracy VanReenan spent Sunday with his brother Ernest.

Administrator's Notice
All persons having claims against the estate of John W. Sheets, deceased, are hereby notified to present the same properly proven to the undersigned administrator for payment. All persons indebted to said estate will please come forward and settle at once.

This 22nd of December, 1914.
T. H. SHEETS,
Administrator John W. Sheets, dec.

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We will require large quantities of fancy dry picked stock to supply our CHRISTMAS TRADE demands and knowing the quality of the Greenbrier, Monroe and Pocahontas county birds to be the finest coming on our market we are desirous of getting in touch with all dressed poultry shippers in this section.

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REFERENCES—
First National Bank of Philadelphia.
Dunn's Bradstreet's, all other Mercantile Agencies.
Any Trade Paper or any concern in the Trade.

ARBOVALE

Pretty good winter this. On last Wednesday morning the thermometer registered 16 degrees below zero at Arbovale, the coldest for several years.

The Virginia Lumber Company had to lay off part of their hands on account of the snow being too deep to work on the railroad.

Roy Shears has been hauling logs to the sawmill at Mr. Suttons.

Lawrence Conrad sold his fine saddle horse to Frank Ashford last week.

Mr. Evans, our school teacher, was called home last week on account of the sickness of his mother.

Billy Riley is able to be out after being confined to the house for sometime with rheumatism.

J. W. Oliver, of Greenbank, was at B. M. Arbogast's, Monday getting his horses shod ready for the ice.

De Warner returned last week from Pendleton County where he had been for the last three weeks husking corn.

Perle Sheets is getting along finely with the Pine Grove school.

Mack Kerr expects to go to Baltimore this week to a hospital.

Mr. Hamed shipped quite a lot of turkeys and chickens last Saturday.

Miss Pearl Warner returned home last week from Durbin where she had been staying for sometime.

James Gillespie was shopping at Cass last Saturday.

C. C. Riley spent Sunday at home. He has been working with the carpenter force at Cass.

Uriah Hevener expects to finish his logging job soon.

The Conrad boys finished their job of cutting logs for Uriah Hevener.

A train load of 500 horses arrived at Hinton Saturday night; another 500 Sunday night; another 500 Monday night. These animals are being taken to Newport News from Chicago and Kansas City and are for the British government. The law requires that stock trains be stopped five hours for food and rest after 36 hours traveling. So far Hinton has generally been made a stopping place for the horses.—Hinton Herald.

Stockholders Meeting
Notice to stockholders of the Marlinton & Academy Mutual Company. The annual meeting of the stockholders of the above company will be held at Hillsboro, W. Va., Saturday, January 9th, 1915, at 10 a. m.

F. W. RUCKMAN, Sec.

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